

Appl. No. : 09/874,563
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Claim Amendments

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for outputting recommended preferences based on predetermined preferences, the method executing on a computer system, wherein the computer system includes including a processor, a database, an input device and an output device, and wherein the database includes a plurality of datafiles each containing a plurality of predetermined preferences, the method comprising the following steps:

accepting signals from the input device to indicate a plurality of user preferences; comparing at least a subset of the user preferences against the plurality of datafiles in the database to identify matching datafiles, each matching datafile containing preferences matching at least a threshold number of the indicated user preferences;

~~using the processor to search the database and to determine the number of user preferences that match preferences in a given datafile;~~

~~using the processor to identify datafiles with a number of matching preferences above a first threshold number;~~

selecting preferences from the identified datafiles, wherein the selected preferences do not match the user preferences; and

outputting, by means of the output device, the selected preferences.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is an artist's name.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is the title of a movie.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system further includes a data communications network, a first user input device, and a second user input device, wherein the processor, database, first user input device, second user

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input device and output device are coupled to the network, and wherein the first and second user input devices are remotely located from each other.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the "selecting preferences" step further comprises: the subsets of

(a) for each unmatching preference in the identified datafiles, determining the a number of other preferences in the identified datafiles that match the unmatching preference and assigning the determined number to the preference; and

(b) using the processor to select selecting one or more unmatching preferences with the highest assigned numbers.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the number of preferences in a datafile is limited to 10, and wherein the first threshold number is 5.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the number of preferences in a datafile is limited to 10, and wherein only those unmatching preferences that also appear in 50% or more of the identified data files are selected in substep (b).

8. (Currently amended) An apparatus for identifying preferences, the apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a database coupled to the processor;

means, coupled to the processor, for accepting signals to indicate first and second preferences;

means, coupled to the processor, for creating an association between the first and second preferences and for storing the first and second preferences in the database as a first datafile;

means, coupled to the processor, for accepting signals to indicate a user preference;

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means, coupled to the processor, for determining that the user preference matches the first preference;

means, coupled to the processor, for retrieving a correlated second preference from the database; and

an output device, coupled to the processor, for outputting the second preference.

9. (Currently amended) A method for recommending music selections based on a user's preferred music selections, ~~the method including a computer system, the computer system including a database, input device and output device, the method comprising the following steps:~~

storing a plurality of associated music selections in the database;

accepting signals from the user input device to indicate a plurality, m , of a user's preferred music selections;

~~using the processor to determine~~ determining that a number of the preferred music selections match with the associated music selections in the database;

~~using the processor to determine~~ determining a ~~the~~ number of unmatched associated music selections in the database; and

outputting, by means of the output device, the unmatched associated music selections.

10. (Currently amended) An apparatus for recommending music selections based on a user's preferred music selections, the apparatus comprising:

a computer system including a database;

means for storing a plurality of associated music selections in the database;

means for accepting signals from the user input device to indicate a plurality, m , of a user's preferred music selections;

means for determining that a number, n , of the preferred music selections match with the ~~associates~~ associated music selections in the database; and

means for determining the number of unmatched associated music selections in the database; and

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~~means for outputting the unmatched associated music selections.~~

11. (Currently amended) A method for outputting an ordered list of recommended objects based on an input object, ~~the computer system including a processor, database, input device and an output device~~, the method comprising ~~the following steps:~~

- ~~using the processor to store storing pairs of ranked objects in the database;~~
- ~~using the processor to assign assigning a ranking number to each of the pairs of ranked objects and storing the ranking number as associated in association with the pair;~~
- ~~accepting signals from the input device to indicate an object;~~
- ~~using the processor to find occurrences of the selected object in the pairs of ranked objects;~~
- ~~B | for each pair in which the selected object occurs, determining the non-matching object in the pair that does not match the selected object;~~
- ~~using the processor to order ordering non-matching objects into a list according to the ranking number for the pair that the non-matching object belongs to; and~~
- ~~outputting the list as an ordered list of recommended objects.~~

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein each object is an artist's name.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein each object is the title of a movie.

14. (Currently amended) An apparatus for outputting an ordered list of recommended objects based on an input object, the apparatus comprising:

- ~~a computer system, the computer system including a processor, and a database, wherein the processor is coupled to the processor database;~~
- ~~pairing means, coupled to the processor, for storing pairs of ranked objects in the database;~~

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ranking means for assigning a ranking number to each of the pairs of ranked objects and storing a given ranking number in association as associated with a given stored pair;

input means, coupled to the processor, for accepting signals from a human user to indicate a selected object;

finding means for finding occurrences of the selected object in the pairs of ranked objects;

determining means for determining, for each pair, an the object in the pair that does not match the selected object;

ordering means for ordering non-matching objects into a list according to the ranking number for the pair that the non-matching object belongs to; and

output means, coupled to the processor, for outputting the list as an ordered list of recommended objects.

15. (New) In a multi-user computer system that provides user access to a database of objects, a method of recommending objects to a user, the method comprising:

(a) generating a data structure which stores groupings of objects known to be of interest to a community of users;

(b) identifying a first set of objects that are known to be of interest to a first user;

(c) accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects containing similarities with the first set of objects;

(d) generating a combined set of objects from the identified one or more corresponding sets of objects; and

(e) providing at least one of the combined set of objects generated in (d).

16. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein a copy of the first set of objects is contained within the data structure.

17. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the database of objects comprises a plurality of digital audio selections.

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18. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the first set of objects are identified based upon user input.

19. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects containing similarities with the first set of objects comprises accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects having at least a threshold measure of similarities in common with the first set of objects.

20. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects containing similarities with the first set of objects comprises accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects having at least some dissimilarities with respect to the first set of objects.

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21. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the multi-user computer system includes a remote computer communicatively coupled via a network to a plurality of user computers, and wherein the method further comprises;

generating the data structure on the remote computer;
style="padding-left: 40px;">identifying the first set of objects on the remote computer in response to received input on the user computer;
style="padding-left: 40px;">accessing the data structure on the remote computer to identify the one or more corresponding sets of objects;
style="padding-left: 40px;">generating the combined set of objects on the remote computer; and
style="padding-left: 40px;">providing at least one of the combined set of objects to the user computer for playback by the user computer.

22. (New) A method for generating a recommendation to a user for a media object from a plurality of media objects located in a media object database stored in a memory, the method comprising:

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identifying a user profile indicating preferred media objects for the user;
filtering the plurality of media objects located in the media object database into a filtered pool of media objects based upon the user profile and one or more stored profiles;
determining a measure of relevance for the media objects in the filtered pool based upon at least the user profile and the one or more stored profiles; and
recommending to the user, a media object selected from the filtered pool of media objects based at least in part upon the media object's measure of relevance.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the plurality of media objects comprises a plurality of digital audio selections.

24. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the first set of objects are identified based upon user input.

25. (New) A machine readable medium having stored thereon machine executable instructions, which when executed operate to implement a method comprising:

(a) generating a data structure which stores groupings of objects known to be of interest to a community of users;
(b) identifying a first set of objects of interest to a first user;
(c) accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects containing similarities with the first set of objects;
(d) generating a combined set of objects from the identified one or more corresponding sets of objects; and
(e) providing at least one of the combined set of objects generated in (d).

26. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 25, wherein a copy of the first set of objects is contained within the data structure.

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27. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 25, wherein said objects comprise a plurality of digital audio selections.

28. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 25, wherein the first set of objects are identified based upon user input.

29. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 25, wherein accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects containing similarities with the first set of objects comprises accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects having at least a threshold measure of similarities in common with the first set of objects.

30. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 29, wherein accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects containing similarities with the first set of objects comprises accessing the data structure to identify one or more corresponding sets of objects having at least some dissimilarities with respect to the first set of objects.

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31. (New) A machine readable medium having stored thereon machine executable instructions designed to generate a recommendation to a user for a media object from a plurality of media objects located in a media object database, the instructions, which when executed implement a method comprising:

identifying a user profile indicating preferred media objects for the user;

filtering the plurality of media objects located in the media object database into a filtered pool of media objects based upon the first user profile and one or more stored profiles;

determining a measure of relevance for the media objects in the filtered pool based upon at least the user profile and the one or more stored profiles; and

recommending to the user, a media object selected from the filtered pool of media objects based at least in part upon the media object's measure of relevance.

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32. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 31, wherein the plurality of media objects comprises a plurality of digital audio selections.

33. (New) The machine readable medium of claim 31, wherein the first set of objects are identified based upon user input.

34. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the user profile indicates an artist's name.

35. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the preference is an artist's name.

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36. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein determining that a number of the preferred music selections match with the associated music selections in the database comprises determining that a number of preferred digital audio music titles match digital audio music titles stored in the database.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising means for outputting the unmatched associated music selections.

38. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein each object is an artist's name.